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Concerned women for America : the handmaidens of the new right

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Right**

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**CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA:
THE HANDMAIDENS OF THE NEW RIGHT**

A Thesis

Presented to

**The Faculty of the Department of Social Science
San Jose State University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts**


By

Teri Ann Bengiveno

May 1989

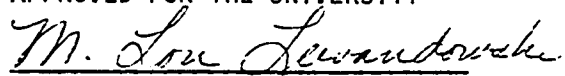
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Dedicated:

To my mother, Gloria Ann Scoppettone
Bengiveno, who serves as a constant
source of inspiration.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The fundamentalist religion, which many thought had disappeared into the hills and rural areas of the South, has re-emerged in many sectors of American life with new vitality, different techniques, and a wide appeal, making it a religion for now, the old-time religion with a face lift.

Perry Deane Young¹

My interest in the New Right began in college partially because I participated in a couple of classes with fundamentalist students. I immediately became aware of the problem fundamentalists created in a public institution of higher education. For example, in one senior seminar on ethics, we discussed the reading assignment for that day by analyzing the author's viewpoint on an ethical issue. Fundamentalist students constantly interrupted and quoted directly from the scriptures. It appeared to me that these students refused to look at the assigned readings fairly; they took the literal interpretation of the Bible to define appropriate action in all ethical situations. On another occasion, several women in the class brought a chapter from Anne Wilson Schaef's Women's Reality to point out the differences in women's and men's perceptions of reality. To

the fundamentalist students, this chapter was irrelevant because women are the "weaker vessel." Additional quotations from the Bible such as Ephesians 5:23, "the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the Church," were used to try to put these female students in "their place" and also to let the entire class know that an attempt to incorporate feminist literature into a discussion on Christian ethics was not justified.

These types of interruptions created an atmosphere in which the fundamentalist students, deriving their "authority" from the Bible, tried to control the class discussion. The question arises: what do you do with them? From what I have observed, the answer to the question has been at first to try to get these students to read and listen to others' viewpoints, or to ignore them in hopes they will just fade away. Both routes have oftentimes ended in frustration because of the fundamentalists' literal interpretation of the Bible. An attempt to debate the Bible takes up a considerable amount of class time (which often is what fundamentalists are trying to accomplish). But to ignore their statements in hopes they will go unnoticed or will not be continued is too naive for such a complex problem. The New Right has not faded out of the picture. Instead it has consolidated power and increased its strength. My hope is that this study will help supply

information and analysis, so that the disturbances from the New Right can be coped with more effectively.

The 1980s have witnessed an accelerated reaction to modern society. While fundamentalism, as a movement, has traditionally thrived on the conflict between the moral decision-making process and the situations brought forth by the technological world, the decade of the 80s has featured enhanced hostility and action. Fundamentalism has global dimensions that are anti-intellectual and anti-science. Following a brief treatment of patriarchy, discussion will focus on the recent rise of the fundamentalist Christian movement in the United States.

Initially one must understand the prime underpinning of feminism, which is that the white male patriarchal system has fathered the fundamentalist movement. This system is the major barrier to women's achieving equal opportunity for equal status. According to radical feminist, Mary Daly, patriarchy is a "society manufactured and controlled by males: Fatherland; society in which every legitimated institution is entirely in the hands of males"2 A brief summary of the effects of patriarchy follows to illustrate the sexism inherent in a patriarchal society.

Patriarchy creates split consciousness. When body and mind are split, one must confront the fact that woman can create with her body and her mind, while man can create only with his mind. In compensation, to cover his own lack of completeness, to make himself feel

superior, man claims all rational-intellectual processes as his own, devaluing all bodily, emotional, and intuitive functions, while simultaneously saying that these functions are all that women are capable of. Patriarchy is based on fear of the Female and the suppression of all "female" qualities: woman, nature, the body, feelings and emotion, instinct, intuition, and finally, life itself.³

Patriarchy is about the power of men and their control over women. The patriarchal system both creates and governs our society; it writes our laws, decides how to disseminate education and information, controls our economy, and produces a hierarchical structure by which we measure ourselves. When patriarchy controls religious parts of society, its structure takes the following form:

God
Men
Women
Children
Animals
Earth.⁴

Those closest to the top have power over everyone and everything else below them.

One integral aspect of this system is its dualistic thinking. According to Anne Wilson Schaef,

It thinks in dichotomies and believes that the world must be viewed in that way. We are trained to perceive things dualistically and to simplify the world into "either-ors."⁵

Although this thought system appears to be convenient, it creates widespread problems of understanding reality, understanding self, and communicating understandings because it fosters dualistic thinking in ways illustrated by the following columns:

Right	Wrong
Good	Evil
Aggressive	Passive
Smart	Dumb
Strong	Weak
White	Black
Virgin	Whore
Mind	Body
Male	Female

Such duality of thought creates the problem cited above because those who subscribe to the dichotomies have difficulty identifying with one side unless they are negating the other. This problem shows forth in the example of women's place. A woman cannot be both the virgin and the whore or strong and weak at the same time. This simplistic system does not allow for creativity or paradox; and so, because ours is definitely not a simplistic world, this thought pattern is inadequate and even damaging.

Yet, in our society, there is a growing religious and political movement that perpetuates and strengthens the patriarchal system and its thought and speech processes. While fundamentalism has been around for centuries, its recent form, resulting from a merger of the political and religious right, has taken our country by storm. For

example, the fundamentalist campaign to register millions of voters in the 1980s helped achieve the presidential victories of Ronald Reagan and George Bush.⁶ Another example illustrating their nationwide power appears in their role in the creation of Operation Rescue, an organization which was founded in 1986, and which uses tactics of civil disobedience to try to shut down abortion clinics.


That patriarchy is the ruling idea in this fundamentalist movement is illustrated by the fact that men, who see themselves made in "God's image," continue to lead the fundamentalist hierarchy. Pat Robertson, who ran for President, and Jerry Falwell, whose wealth and influence continue to operate nationally, exemplify the fundamentalist men who are active in influencing both the local and national levels of government. Randall Terry, founder of Operation Rescue, advocates action to "save babies" and help "misinformed" women. The top of the hierarchy includes control of both religious and political power and the financial backing which is so closely associated with power in our country.

Fundamentalist women also support this patriarchal hierarchy even though it is, as this thesis argues, the instrument of their own oppression. These women find their identification through their association with the men in their lives: husband, son, and Jesus. They support a

system which denies them control of their own bodies and thoughts. They denounce the gains made by the women's movement and advocate a return to strict sex roles. Feminists for over the past twenty years have fought for women's political, economic, and social equality, for the right of women to control their own bodies, and for the need of women to define themselves independent of their relationship to men. Right wing women are an extremely interesting group to study at this stage in American history because they see themselves as the antithesis of the women's movement.

It is the purpose of this thesis to use a feminist framework to examine contemporary right wing women, specifically Concerned Women for Women (CWA), a New Right group whose membership totals more than 600,000. This requires prior understanding of the patriarchal context and the historical merger of the religious and political right. After placing CWA in context, feminism--the very movement the right wing women have been so critical of and hoped to defeat--needs a chance to respond. A feminist analysis, which seeks to modify and eventually replace the patriarchal structure with an equitable one, is necessary to counter the ideas, efforts, and claims of victory by the New Right movement, as exemplified by CWA.

The feminist movement, with all of its diversity, allows for paradox and challenges us to go beyond the current dualistic thought pattern ingrained in the patriarchal system. Further, feminists offer another option to the militaristic mind-set language used so often by fundamentalists who believe in the literal interpretation of the Bible. While fundamentalists wage a communication war through manipulation and intimidation, feminists fight for equality by challenging the system and its values and definitions.



Chapter Two

THE NEW RIGHT

All mass movements generate in their adherents a readiness to die and a proclivity for united action; all of them, irrespective of the doctrine they preach and the program they project, breed fanaticism, enthusiasm, fervent hope, hatred and intolerance; all of them are capable of releasing a powerful flow of activity in certain departments of life; all of them demand blind faith and single hearted allegiance.

Eric Hoffer⁷

What is new about the New Right in the United States is that political conservatives joined forces with the religious conservatives in the 1970s, whereas the Old Right did not attempt to unite the power of the religious and political sectors. To the Old Right fundamentalists, the power of religion was far more important than political power. The change came when Old-time fundamentalist preachers like Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, Robert Schuller, and Jimmy Swaggart were joined by newcomers James Robison, Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker, Tim LaHaye, and Jerry Falwell. Until 1979, when the Moral Majority was founded, Falwell had discarded the idea of being involved with politics. But then he said that he was told to do more than preach; he

received a "divine Mandate" to go to Capitol Hill. This new role brought a powerful presence to politics; for the electronic church industry with more than 3,500 local and cable stations, of which Falwell is a member, earns more than 500 million dollars a year, all of which is tax-free. The most obvious evidence that the religious right is fully into politics is that in 1988 Pat Robertson, another electronic church member, was a significant contender for the Republican party presidential nomination.

In addition to the religious and political merger by the New Right, another principal factor that differentiates the New from the Old Right is the former's conviction that all political and social ills stem from an America in religious decay. According to Senator Thomas McIntyre, a Democrat from New Hampshire:

It had become plausible to blame permissiveness for a rich roster of evils: corruption in high office; government waste and inefficiency; lack of courage and purpose in foreign policy; a denigration of patriotism; an excess of costly frills and a paucity of standards in public education; welfare cheating and a social atmosphere that encouraged youth rebellion, the generation gap, the counter-culture, the drug culture, sexual promiscuity, disdain for the work ethic, disinterest in religion, and a disinclination to marry and procreate within the sanctions of church and state.⁸

The New Right seeks to correct such problems by initiating various coalitions of conservative groups. Fundamentalists have found it in their best interest to align themselves with other conservative religious groups.

They wish to join forces and work for the same political agenda. Phyllis Schlafly, Richard Viguerie, and John Terry Dolan are all Catholics active in the fundamentalist movement. Viguerie sees great potential for a diverse coalition of

. . . 50 million born-again Protestants, 30 million morally conservative Catholics, 3 million Mormons and 2 million Orthodox and Conservative Jews-with whom to build a pro-family, Bible believing coalition.⁹

The political agenda of these coalitions is "anti" a number of phenomena, including Communism, science, desegregation, welfare, feminism, and abortion. Many aspects of this platform specifically connect the religious with the political right. For example, anti-communism and anti-abortion planks are a powerful part of the agenda. Communism is the enemy of both Christianity and capitalism and thus provides an easy target for religious and political conservatives. The political and religious leaders picked controversial issues and seized the opportunity to both stimulate and borrow from the reborn conservative Christian movement across the country. Abortion, a heavily contested issue since the 1973 Roe vs Wade decision, became the emotional key to the movement. According to two observers:

Some, both men and women, had obviously joined the pro-life movement to combat the rising tide of feminism or to secure for themselves greater comfort in their traditional life-styles or sex roles.¹⁰

Daily, conservative Christians lobby Congress and other government officials in Washington, D.C., and many belong to a number of fundamentalist political action committees (PACs). Among them are the Moral Majority, Conservative Caucus, Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, Pro-Family Forum, National Prayer Campaign, Christian Voice, National Conservative Political Action Committee, American Conservative Union, Young Americans for Freedom, Religious Roundtable, Eagle Forum, Right to Life Commission, Fund To Restore Educated Electorate, Institute for Christian Economics, Campus Crusade for Christ, Council for National Policy, and Concerned Women for America. Why did Falwell receive a "divine Mandate" and Robertson run for office in the 1980s? To answer the question, one must look behind the pulpits to the men who were instrumental in uniting religion and politics. Richard Viguerie, John Terry Dolan, and Paul Weyrich are three of the most important men with the minds for politics and access to money.

Viguerie, nicknamed "the moneyman," sends more than 100 million letters out annually. As pointed out in Holy Terror by Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman and in God's Bullies by Perry Deane Young, Viguerie has used the money he receives as "gifts" to support conservatives like Jesse Helms, Jim McClure, and Orrin Hatch in the Senate. Viguerie's heroes are General Douglas MacArthur and Senator

Joseph McCarthy, and, like them, he seems prepared to stop at little to exert his power. He has found the direct mailing system to be the most valuable tool for reaching the largest number of people.

Dolan used his place as chair of the National Conservative Political Action Committee, the most powerful PAC in the country, to further the New Right agenda. Dolan also used his money and power to see that certain conservative individuals were elected while particular liberal Democrats were defeated. Senators whom Dolan helped get elected include Jesse Helms, Gordon Humphrey, Roger Jepsen, and Paul Laxalt. Congressmen whom Dolan supported include John Ashbrook, Bob Bauman, Bob Dornan, Dan Crane, Phil Crane, George Hansen, Larry McDonald, and Guy Vander Jagt. In 1978 Dolan's NCPAC

scored its first major successes with the defeat of Democratic Senators Dick Clark of Iowa, Floyd Haskell of Colorado and Thomas McIntyre of New Hampshire. New Hampshire was a particular triumph for Dolan, who used Boston television to reach New Hampshire voters and hand victory to his hand-picked selection, Republican Gordon Humphrey, a former airline pilot with virtually no political experience.¹¹

Dolan also supported and raised money for an agenda that condemned homosexuality. Yet he "was thoroughly enjoying the gay life his political fund-raising sought to squash."¹²

Just as the two previously mentioned men chaired important PACs, Paul Weyrich founded the Committee for the

Survival of a Free Congress in 1974. Prior to founding this organization, Weyrich formed an alliance with the archconservative Joseph Coors. The multimillionaire Coors is known for his support of the Right, especially the John Birch Society. In 1973 Weyrich and Coors formed a New Right think tank, the Heritage Foundation. One of the first things the Foundation set out to do was to find a more effective way to bring conservative ideas to the majority of Americans. Weyrich established the Free Congress and Education Foundation, and he also met with the forces of E.E. McAteer, the founder of the Religious Roundtable in 1979. Weyrich concentrated a great deal of effort on convincing television evangelists like Falwell and Robertson to get actively involved in conservative politics.

All of these men and their organizations contributed to the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and 1984. In 1980 alone they registered more than two million first time voters. Yet when the 1988 presidential election recorded the lowest voter turnout since 1924, this statistic pleased New Right leaders who correctly believe an overall low voter turnout will enhance the chance of success for their agenda. As Weyrich has said:

I don't want everyone to vote. Our leverage in the election quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down. We have no responsibility, moral or otherwise, to turn out our opposition, it's important to turn out those who are with us.¹³

These men and their PACs have furthered an agenda which attempts to take away basic rights of women like the right to a safe and legal abortion. With an androcentric stand on issues like abortion which specifically affect women, one might wonder what role is played in the New Right by females in the fundamentalist movement. Simply stated, they are the handmaidens of the New Right. The men control the movement, but women are the majority of its participants. Why are so many women in the ranks of this conservative army? Andrea Dworkin's groundbreaking Right-Wing Women offers a beginning to uncover the answer to this question.

Dworkin's first chapter gives a myth-made formula that is a restatement of the patriarchal ideology that keeps subservient and dependent women as objects of worship in our society. There are five ingredients in this formula: form, shelter, safety, rules, and love.¹⁴

A summary of Dworkin's argument follows. Women act according to their social, biological, and sexual orientation, which generates the standard or form by which they are to live their lives. Women who are with men have shelter provided for them, and this shelter implies physical and economic security and protection from economic exploitation. Safety follows if the woman is obedient,

because no harm will come to her. Marriage protects the woman from rape.¹⁵

In a society constructed and ruled by men, there have to be rules to follow in order for women to fit in. If a woman follows the rules and does not ask questions, then she is rewarded with love. Everyone wants to be loved, so if she follows this path, she will be loved for her sexual submission, child-bearing capacity, and obedience to her husband and Jesus. She will receive material support from her husband and compassion from Jesus. If she follows this formula, then she is worshiped because she is a good woman. On the religious level, she is superior because of her moral nature.

Yet feminists have pointed out the flaws of the new Right formula. The social, biological, and sexual standard proposed by the Right assumes women are married; that they will reproduce. Feminism offers alternatives to this form by accepting life-styles which do not conform to this standard. The assertion that all women conform to this set standard is an inaccurate description of society. Furthermore women are not safe, and the statistics show that most rapes occur in the home and are executed by a member or an acquaintance of the family. Therefore the shelter does not protect the woman.

The opposite to the good woman in the dualistic, conservative mind-set is the bad woman who is defiled because she is a woman who, without a man, dares to know sexual desire. Feminists who transcend the dualistic mind-set and the rules of the game are seen as a threat to everything from the national security to the possibility of redemption of the human race, and the New Right hates them for the perceived dangers they bring. "Feminism is hated because women are hated. Antifeminism is a direct expression of misogyny; it is the political defense of woman hating. This is because feminism is the liberation movement of women."¹⁶ When one woman is liberated from the formula with its specific rules, the patriarchal family, which is the building block of our religious, political, and economic structure, is in danger. The New Right cites the decline of the patriarchal family, and thus society at large, as the root of societal evils. Society's problems are caused by a variety of factors, but the feminist movement, because it advocates social change in a direction that affects tradition, especially traditional family relationships, is a likely target for the New Right extremists.

Right wing women, like Phyllis Schlafly, the chief spokesperson for women who opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, have made feminism the enemy and have done everything in their power to counter the goals of feminists

and the gains won by feminists. For example, through her effective use of propaganda Schlafly, head of the Eagle Forum, played a considerable role in the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).¹⁷ In the 1970s and early 1980s, she was the leader of conservative women, but then the time evidently came to pass the torch. A new handmaiden appeared who has been a key figure in voicing the concerns of fundamentalist women in the 1980s and into the 1990s. She is Beverly LaHaye. Unlike Schlafly, LaHaye is an example of the merging of politics and religion which has characterized the New Right and made its influence stronger than that of the Old Right. Her organization, Concerned Women for America (CWA), has more than 600,000 members. CWA beautifully illustrates how the New Right makes use of its women members to impose its old ideas. To understand CWA better, one needs to look in depth at the woman behind the organization: Beverly LaHaye.

Chapter Three

BEVERLY LAHAYE

Our nation has drifted toward an amoral God-hating, secular state because we Christians have been ignorant of the enemies' devices.

Beverly LaHaye¹⁸

Beverly LaHaye grew up during the Depression. The younger of two daughters, she had an unconventional childhood in that her father died when she was young and her mother married three times. She became a suburban housewife in the 1950s and expressed a yearning for the security that the traditional sex roles of the 1950s seemed to provide.

Having graduated early from high school, she entered a Christian college at seventeen. Her husband, Tim, recalls that time.

We met in a fine Christian college where we were preparing to serve the Lord. Bev dedicated her life to Christ when she was fourteen, hoping someday to serve as a missionary. At a summer camp, when I was fifteen, I had surrendered to the call to preach the Gospel. Bev finished high school early, so she was only seventeen when I met her at the dinner table the fourth week into our freshman year. I had done a two-year stretch in the Air Force and was twenty at the time.¹⁹

They soon married, and in their junior year of college began their first ministry at a small country church

in South Carolina. During that time Beverly LaHaye gave birth to their first daughter, Linda. Following their stay in South Carolina, they moved to Minneapolis where Tim LaHaye was pastor for six years. During this stay, their two sons Larry and Lee were born. Tim LaHaye received his Doctor of Ministries Degree from Western Conservative Baptist Union.

Their last child, Lori, was born in San Diego, California, where the family had moved in 1956 when Tim LaHaye took over the Scott Memorial Baptist Church. He founded the Institute for Creation Research in San Diego and also in 1980 started California's branch of the Moral Majority. Tim LaHaye is the author of eleven books whose titles range from How To Study the Bible for Yourself to The Unhappy Gays: What Everyone Should Know about Homosexuality.

Together the LaHayes began giving family life seminars in 1971. They also have a weekly television program "LaHayes on Family Life," which airs on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, Praise the Lord Cable Network, and National Christian Network. The couple has co-authored two books: The Act of Marriage (1976), which is basically a sex guide for conservative Christians, and Spirit Controlled Family Living (1978). A brief examination of the contents of the books reveals information about Beverly LaHaye's

beliefs and life-style. The effects of fundamentalism on her life may be taken to be emblematic of others in CWA.

In Spirit Controlled Family Living, the couple describes eight causes for today's breakdown of the family: the dominance of atheistic, anti-Christian humanism in schools and media; immorality and promiscuity; legalization of pornography; women in the work force; easy divorce; permissive philosophy of the last generation; urbanized men; and Women's Liberation morality.²⁰

To the LaHayes the way to cure these ills is to turn the family over to Christ. They provide a variety of ways to help facilitate this process. Men and women have specific roles. The man of the house is the family leader; ideal lover; family priest, protector, provider; and father-teacher. The woman is the subordinate, home manager, lover, ideal of feminine beauty, and mother-teacher.²¹ The woman more specifically must understand that

she is a subordinate, a vice-president, who serves directly under the head of the household or the president, who is the husband. Because this is God's design, she cannot be a spiritual woman without obeying the command of submission.²²

The wife/mother has the distinct job of correctly modeling the proper role development for her children.

Beverly LaHaye has written three books on her own: The Spirit Controlled Woman (1976), How To Develop Your Child's Temperament (1977), and Who But A Woman? (1984).

The second book, like other books which she has written with Tim, is a guide for Christian living. How To Develop Your Child's Temperament discusses children's temperaments and stages of development. Children are born with a sinful nature which requires spanking. She instructs parents, particularly mothers, on how to discuss sex with their children. For example, in discussing Freud's theory of penis envy, which assumes that girls regret not having a penis and that boys worry about castration after they realize their sisters do not have penises, Beverly LaHaye advises readers that when a child asks questions about anatomy and sex,

simply explain to your boy or girl that fathers and boys have a penis and mothers and girls have a special bag built inside their tummy called a uterus. This bag is a special place where God makes babies grow.²³

The book also details the proper guidelines for dating. Parents must strictly enforce these rules or risk losing their teen to the secular world. The rules include beginning dating at fifteen years old and over, dating only Christians, scheduling a pre-dating interview with the father, approving all dates in advance, double dating only with other Christian couples until high school graduation, no public showing of affection, no parking, and setting the curfew at 11:00 p.m. for girls and 11:30 p.m. for boys.²⁴ She advocates a cloistered life for these young people in

that every attempt should be made on behalf of the parents to see that their children are surrounded only by Christians. Her views on college further exemplify this point:

I am convinced that all Christian young people should avoid the secular college as long as possible and trust God to provide them with a Christian college experience.²⁵

However, this woman, who has written several books, gives family life seminars, and now speaks across the entire country did not always possess the confidence to address the public. She saw her primary role as wife and mother, in that order, and she was happy for her husband's success but still felt inferior. Then, while in her thirties, she was moved spiritually.

My inferiority was developing because I was looking at me, me, me. I realized that I was so internalized that it really would have to be Almighty God that began to change my thought pattern and direction, and He did.²⁶

Tim and Beverly LaHaye discuss their marriage crisis in Spirit Controlled Family Living. Beverly then went to a Sunday School Conference where she met Dr. Henry Brandt, a Christian psychologist, who helped change her life. She phoned Tim LaHaye and invited him to come to the final day of the conference. Later he wrote about their experience.

Because Bev and I came down from that mountain filled with the Holy Spirit, He changed our marriage, family, and ministry. Gradually our selfishness, my anger, Bev's fears, and our joint bullheadedness have been replaced by the love, joy, and peace which the Holy Spirit provides when we are controlled by Him.²⁷

Beverly LaHaye, who at times resented picking up after her husband (dirty clothes in particular), came to view those actions as her way of serving Jesus. After this spiritual encounter, she gained the confidence that she felt she needed.²⁸

Her latest book, Who But A Woman?, could not have been possible without this transformation. Because Beverly now felt she had the strength to build an organization of Christian women to further the work of the Holy Spirit, that book discusses the founding of Concerned Women for America.

Chapter Four

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA

Remember, we are the women's organization that truly respects men.

Beverly LaHaye²⁹

In November, 1977, an event took place that would further change the course of Beverly LaHaye's life. The event was the National Women's Convention in Houston, Texas. At this convention she heard speeches by Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan and other feminists, and, needless to say, she was quite appalled at what she heard. Apparently the goals and gains of the second wave of the feminist movement had not reached LaHaye until 1977. In her mind she translated what she heard from the leading feminists into a lesbian/Marxist agenda. To counteract the aims of the feminist movement, she founded CWA in 1979. It opened a Washington, D.C., office, funded by private donations, on September 27, 1983. While Beverly LaHaye's home base is San Diego, she continues to travel around the country on behalf of CWA. The organization is expanding through kitchen table lobbying, a grass-roots approach to organizing people around

a specific cause. In this case, a host woman holds a coffee get-together in her home and invites other women from her community to discuss their concerns. Kitchen table lobbying is an effective way to first organize women who do not yet view themselves as political. CWA membership is now at more than double the membership of the National Organization for Women, a liberal feminist group that began in 1966.

Due to continued growth, the CWA staff exceeds twenty-seven, whose size in 1988 forced the organization to move to a larger office. CWA has active chapters in all fifty states and is celebrating its Tenth Anniversary in 1989 by mounting a membership drive. The organization's goal is to have one million members by the end of the year. Part of the celebration included new glossy red, white, and blue membership cards for "you and your spouse." As part of the recruitment, members were also given Tenth Anniversary bumper and windshield stickers for their vehicles.

In order to analyze the potential and actual impact of CWA, one must look at its structure, selected contents of its monthly publication Concerned Women For America, its political and religious agenda, and the types of political actions used to further the New Right cause.

CWA has a typical organizational structure, starting with the Board of Directors (eleven members, all women) at the top of the hierarchy. It is ironic that an organization

working for the fundamentalist cause should have a Board of Directors comprised entirely of females when the movement itself is orchestrated predominantly by men. President Beverly LaHaye, who is also a board member, follows with a staff behind her: Directors of Management, Communications, Legislative Affairs, Finance and Operations; Assistant General Legal Counsel; Director of Field Development; and Director of Amor a la Libertad, a position in charge of missionary work in Latin American countries. A news staff consisting of an editor and writers exists for the publication and mailings.

In addition each state has a number of chapters, and there are corresponding representatives who are responsible for a small number of chapters in each state. For example, there are five area representatives for California. Each chapter has a leader as well. Area representatives must have previously been chapter leaders. They also go through one year of training, which includes leadership conferences and interaction with other representatives. These representatives work out of their own homes according to guidelines the national organization provides. According to Marcia Lines, the Bay Area Representative in California, the goals of the chapters are to promote CWA and to inform and educate the community. Representatives and leaders meet with women who are interested in getting involved

politically. They begin to lobby from their kitchen tables by collecting money to keep the Washington office running, to support or oppose a variety of issues, as well as raising money for Latin American missionaries or the Oliver North Defense Fund. They also do a great deal of letter writing. This organizational structure, which is modeled after successful PACs such as the Moral Majority, NCPAC, and even NOW, distributes work widely and evenly. It allows CWA to reach many people. CWA members unite around the following theme:

The purpose of Concerned Women for America is to preserve, protect, and promote traditional and Judeo-Christian values through education, legal defense, legislative programs, humanitarian aid, and related activities which represent the concerns of men and women who believe in these values.³⁰

The CWA monthly publication, which is an excellent source to examine in order to gain greater insight into CWA, expands and develops this statement of purpose. Each month the publication, usually sixteen to twenty-five pages, is delivered to each member's mailbox. In addition to the newsletter, subscribers also get a variety of letters from Beverly LaHaye during any given month asking for prayers and money.

One might expect a fundamentalist newsletter directed at women to include domestic treatises on how to perform traditional wifely and motherly duties. But this is not the

case; this publication is definitely a political newsletter pushing a conservative agenda. Examples of the newsletter's support of this conservative agenda appear in the following excerpts, including various feature articles, editorials, and monthly news columns highlighting political and religious activities.

A September, 1988, cover story featured a special election issue complete with the voting record of the 100th Congress on issues ranging from the Bork nomination to Contra Aid to Civil Rights. Another section of this issue provided a state-by-state breakdown on the following issues: abortion funding, parental consent/notification, lotteries, criminal sodomy laws, homosexual rights laws, state equal rights amendments, and death penalty and executions.³¹

An additional feature article by then Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett, discussed and answered questions on sex education as part of CWA's first national town meeting. Fundamentalists against secular humanism cases also receive a great deal of attention. These cases involve fundamentalists who have their children in the public school system. Often these parents have filed lawsuits against school districts which teach the theory of evolution in biology classes instead of the biblical creation story.

An additional feature article heavily criticized the Surgeon General's latest report on AIDS; another article discussed the founding of yet a new CWA group: Coalitions for Appropriate Sex Education. As of March, 1988, there were more than three hundred of these coalitions across the country. They are developing what they regard as acceptable curricula for the public school system, and they are beginning the fight at the local level.

In addition, the April, 1988 issue included an intriguing article by Paul Weyrich. It is important to remember that 1988 was an election year and that the same conservatives who helped Ronald Reagan into office in 1984 had begun to severely criticize the Reagan revolution because of the conservative belief that it fell short of Christian expectations. Weyrich's article, "The Reagan Revolution That Wasn't: Why Conservatives Have Achieved So Little," further perpetuates the split between the various conservative factions in the Republican Party. He is distressed by the fact that the conservatives spent hundreds of millions of dollars backing Reagan and yet "We have no power. Having power presupposes holding 'territory.' We hold no territory."³² By territory he means control of the U.S. Senate and the House. Weyrich's message to Republicans is that the Religious Right is not going to continue to elect and support them without getting something in return.

Conservative Weyrich also encourages the New Right to hold public office at the local level.

A series of three articles by David Barton debuted in the July, 1988 issue, entitled "Did School Prayer Work?" He cited the day, June 25, 1962, when the Supreme Court announced that school prayer would no longer be required and then went on to link that date with future increases in sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancy and suicides, divorce rates, and the single parent household. He also tied together the date with declining academic achievement and S.A.T. scores.

A regular feature is Beverly LaHaye's editorial column, "A Word From Beverly." Here she expresses her concerns for America both at home and abroad. For example, she uses the editorial column to advertise and publicize the national conferences and conventions; she later gives her summary of them. She also utilizes the column to discuss the international work. For example, CWA has a humanitarian aid program for the Nicaraguan refugees in Costa Rica.³³

Other regular features are: a "Prayer/Action Network" page that gives the CWA calendar of events, including where and when LaHaye is speaking; a list of the Prayer/Action Chapter Leaders by state with their individual phone numbers for members to contact for more information; and three specific categories of "Prayer," "Praise," and

"Action." A list of petitions and calls for such political action as writing representatives or registering to vote fill the page. The monthly asks members to: "Pray that the judge who hears the administrative trial in the Evelyn Smith case (see February CWA News) will side with the woman who does not want to rent her house to an unmarried couple."³⁴

Full page spreads advertised the fifth annual National Convention, September 22-25, 1988, "Righteousness Exalts A Nation," in Washington D.C. It advertises other conferences as well. During an annual event in April of 1988, "Washington for Jesus," fundamentalists marched through the streets asking "the body of Christ" to join in the movement. A Women's Convention preceded the Prayer Rally. CWA, Eagle Forum, Family Research Council, Free Congress Foundation, Inc., and the Moral Majority united once again to sponsor a "Family Forum '88" in Atlanta in July before the Democratic Convention and in New Orleans in August prior to the Republican Convention. The theme for Family Forum '88 was "2020 Vision: Freedom for Families by 2020."

"Update on News" and "Legislation in Congress" are two additional regular features in the newsletters. "Update on News" reveals the current situations of feminism, gay rights, Planned Parenthood, and the Contras. "Legislation in Congress," highlights specific pieces of legislation.

Specific bills, especially ones on Child Care, pornography, Civil Rights, and religious concerns, fill the page.

Taking into consideration the above examples of the newsletter content, it is easy to see that the CWA newsletter is not a domestic journal, but is rather a periodical aimed at inciting members to act upon their political and religious convictions. To further understand the power of CWA, one must delve deeper into New Right philosophy. Traditionally, the fundamentalist agenda has included anti-communism, anti-socialism, and anti-labor planks. The current agenda includes these items as well as a long list of others. The primary concerns are pro-family and anti-feminism along with legal concerns regarding school curricula.

The year 1979 was the International Year of the Child (IYC), which Beverly LaHaye viewed as a continuation of the "Marxist/lesbian circus" of the National Women's Convention and the International Women's Year in 1977. She saw IYC as a part of a feminist/socialist revolution that was trying to undermine the traditional role of the family. Because feminists/socialists discuss many types of family arrangements, including extended and single parent families, and ask the government to take a more active role in the family (child care for example), LaHaye objects to the feminist/socialist revolution which she believes undermines

the traditional family (male-breadwinner, female-housewife, and child).

In addition to these views, LaHaye faults the United Nations for espousing government care for families and for denouncing Nationalism by saying it is a threat to world peace. CWA is opposed to any group that tries to take power away from the traditional family structure. LaHaye simply felt IYC and the United Nations, by advocating diverse family arrangements, were usurping power from the "model family." CWA firmly believes that parents have the sole right to discipline and train their children to love their country. "The word of God commands us, as parents, to discipline and train our children."³⁵ With the Bible as its guide, CWA does not believe that groups like the American Civil Liberties Union, National Organization for Women, NAACP, AAUW, Amnesty International, Planned Parenthood, and the Gray Panthers should be questioning the traditional family structure. The previously mentioned groups were all in support of IYC.

In 1980 President Jimmy Carter held a White House Conference on Families, and he appointed a forty-one member National Advisory Committee for the conference. LaHaye was appalled to learn that the National Gay Task Force was one of the groups named to the committee. She does not believe lesbians and gay men should have any part in determining

family legislation, but her attack does not stop with homosexuals. "By redefining the meaning of the word family, the feminists and homosexual men hope to gain the legal right to live their perverted life-style protected by the laws of the land."³⁶ The ideological disagreement with the "left's" agenda does not stop with condemnations. If fundamentalist ideas could not be voiced on the National Advisory Committee, then they would form their own committee, and that is exactly what these Christians did by joining the Pro-Family Coalition which consisted of over 150 organizations.

The Pro-Family Coalition established its own platform addressing abortion, the ERA, the Family Protection Act, and family rights. Initially they had to decide on a definition of family acceptable to all aspects of the coalition. According to the Pro-Family Coalition, "A family consists of persons who are related by blood, adoption, or by a legal marriage between unrelated individuals of the opposite sex and children of this relationship."³⁷ Since they did not believe their views would be represented at the National Conference, they held their own conference in July of the same year at Long Beach, California. The title of the conference was "American Pro-Family Conference," and over 7,000 delegates gathered to hear what conservatives like Falwell, Schlafly, Senator Jesse Helms, and Dr. Bill Bright,

head of the Campus Crusade for Christ, had to say about the structure of the family.

A consistent theme throughout many of these organizations, and CWA is no exception, is anti-feminist rhetoric. There appears to be vehement hatred for the gains made by the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. According to LaHaye, "We are called to wage spiritual warfare against the principalities, powers, and authorities who are in opposition to our King, Jesus Christ."³⁸ CWA dedicates itself to reversing the feminist tide in our country. Number one on its list is the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and it is CWA's goal to make sure it never passes. In 1982, as CWA concentrated its efforts on the defeat of the ERA, LaHaye requested:

that CWA members pray about the ERA every Wednesday from January 1 to June 30, 1982, the last possible day for ratification. She chose Wednesday because June 30 was a Wednesday. When the amendment went down to defeat, she took the timing as a sign: "I think this was God's way of reinforcing that prayer does make the difference," she reportedly observed.³⁹

CWA used as many fear tactics as it could to convince Americans that the passage of the ERA would change every social and legal aspect of America. CWA created the hypothetical situation of what our country would be like with the amendment, and CWA painted an unrealistic picture with consequences that would terrify "middle" America. The conservatives told Americans they would lose their right to

privacy and that homosexual marriages would be legalized under the ERA. CWA also told women they would be drafted and held responsible for fifty percent of the monetary support of families. They told men and women there would be no sodomy or adultery laws or single sex schools, and that abortion would be a constitutional right.

Another issue that is very dear to all conservative hearts is the exclusion by various churches of women and homosexuals from the clergy. If the ERA passed, the New Right said churches would have to ordain women and homosexuals. The Right warned Americans not to be fooled by the "simplicity" of the wording in the amendment. To further their cause, CWA poured millions of dollars into commercials and press conferences. CWA also created a slide show titled "The Facade of Feminism." Anyone can schedule a showing in her or his community. Accompanying the show are pamphlets which disclose congressional representatives' views on moral issues.

It should come as no surprise that anti-abortion tactics are among the most powerful tools used by the New Right to try to reverse the 1973 Roe vs Wade decision. Posters and gruesome stories about late term abortions are part of the propaganda utilized to make their points. One must also keep in mind that they are adamantly opposed to sex education and the distribution and availability of

contraceptives on school grounds. The use of semantics has been extremely effective in the anti-abortion campaign. Conservatives equate abortion with murder and believe the unborn has the same rights as "you and I." Of course, they have God on their side and use "Him" a great deal to further their cause. According to LaHaye, "I believe Almighty God is going to pour out His wrath on this nation if we do not, once again, protect the right of the unborn."⁴⁰ The ERA and abortion are just two examples to show the differences of opinion between conservative women and feminists.

More weapons in the conservative arsenal include legislative cases involving conservatives against publishers, educational associations, and school boards. One CWA member, Carolyn Grove, objected to the use of the book The Learning Tree in her daughter's high school English class. She said the book directly attacked her daughter's religious beliefs, and the girl was being forced to read it. Mrs. Grove asked the instructor to assign her daughter another text, which he did, but apparently the girl was "ridiculed" by peers and teacher. Grove continued to fight and eventually Michael Farris, CWA's attorney, took over the case. He filed a lawsuit in 1980 on the federal court level demanding the removal of the textbook. The school attorney convinced the judge to dismiss the case because it was proved that the book did not violate the standard religious

neutrality. Mrs. Grove asked for an appeal, but additional funds were needed, and that is where CWA stepped in to provide long term financial support. As of April, 1988, the court had not rendered a decision.

Vicki Frost, another conservative woman, also received legal support from CWA. The Frost family was the center of media attention a few years ago when Frost objected to the use of certain readers in her daughter's second grade class. She believed the school was teaching her children about socialism, evolution, occult practices, gun control, and telepathic powers. These readers were published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. In 1983, CWA, counseled by Michael Farris, filed a lawsuit against the Church Hill Tennessee School Board on behalf of Christian families everywhere. In the end, Mrs. Frost took all four of her children out of the public school system and placed them in a Christian school. These types of court cases are common across the country.

Also in 1983, the year CWA opened its Washington office, the organization began the "535 Program." CWA trained women to lobby for the pro-family agenda in Washington. This program assigned a trained woman to each of the 435 Representatives in Congress and 100 Senators. These conservatively trained lobbyists visited the

representatives on a regular basis and reported back to their home communities. In LaHaye's own words:

America is a nation based on biblical principles. Christian values should dominate our government. The test of those values is the Bible. Politicians who do not use the Bible to guide their public and private lives do not belong in office.⁴¹

CWA is not stopping at the national level; they have begun training "home district congressional liaisons."

The grass-roots mobilization so successfully employed by NOW in the late 1960s proved a model structure for CWA in the 1970s. It is ironic that the feminist movement has always recognized the connection between the personal and political, and that it took ten years for the fundamentalist women to recognize the benefits of such action.

CWA began to utilize direct mail effectively much in the way NOW had earlier. Chapters began to open in every state in the country with membership dues required. A monthly newsletter kept members politically informed as lobbies tried to get their agendas across in Washington. A National Conference highlighted each year and brought members together. Civil disobedience, which the Right frowned upon in the 1960s, was now allowed to further "the cause." Today civil disobedience demonstrations take place every weekend when fundamentalists try to block the doors to Planned Parenthood clinics.

CWA and NOW are two similar groups as far as structure goes, and each group is forcing the other to deal with specific issues, such as family politics. The similarities stop here. In terms of political philosophy, the two groups could not be further apart.

Chapter Five

THE FEMINIST CHALLENGE

New Right antifeminist politics is a reaction to the feminist challenge to patriarchy within liberal America.
Zillah Eisenstein⁴²

In 1972 when Congress approved and sent the ERA to the states for ratification, the testimonies in favor of approval, whose ability to move the listener persists to today, exemplified the moving spirit of the feminist movement. In Representative Shirley Chisholm's own words:

People have often asked me why I feel that American Blacks and American women have received such treatment. I have always had to respond that I believe it is because American institutions were created by white males and that the freedom, equality, and justice that they mentioned and fought for was intended, albeit unconsciously, for them and them alone.⁴³

From Chisholm's testimony to that of Betty Friedan, one senses the fervor expressed by the advocates of the ERA. According to Friedan:

I speak with a sense of historical urgency at this moment of unprecedented national crisis and torment of enacting after so many years of delay the equal rights amendment to the Constitution which would finally assert women's full equality and inalienable human right, her personal finding under the Constitution, and help bring to an end the war between the sexes which is so closely linked to the violence that is becoming associated with

our Nation and which our Nation is perpetuating on the world.⁴⁴

True it is that the ERA has not been ratified, but that does not mean that the feminist movement is dead. More and more women are becoming educated to understand what second class citizenship means, and academia has given birth to new curricula that center on such subjects. The number of women entering college has doubled since the early 1960s. Today in the 1980s, San Jose State University is not alone in having women make up more than half of the campus population. Among them are women who realized for a long time that their stories were left out of the educational scene, and they worked to change the educational structure and content that ignored or contributed to their oppression. Not only did women write texts of their own that attempted to discuss the whole of humanity and not just the male part, but Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies programs began to appear at universities across the country. These new areas of study proved to be effective tools in the process of women's liberation and thus also helped to further the goals of the movement. An example of this can be seen in Congress' recognition of March as National Women's History Month.

The feminist movement is not about one cause; nor is it fighting for one thing. It is the combination of women

and men fighting for a more just and free society. Just as it did not begin on one certain date with one particular event, the movement has not ended. Rather, it is a progressive drive towards human equality which now has to take on the continued challenge of the New Right.

Because of the New Right's focus on sex role issues, primarily those concerning the family and reproductive duties of women, it is particularly appropriate that a strong factor in the movement to purify America is the "concerned women," the handmaidens of a social agenda greatly influenced by conservative preachers and politicians. It should be kept in mind that this agenda, though championed by these women, would have the effect of establishing, preserving, and extending the white male system that benefits so few. Among the beneficiaries there is next to no diversity in color or ethnicity. The feminist movement continues to challenge this outdated system with an agenda that benefits more than just a select few.

The feminist response to society's concerns has always been a diverse one, and to feminism the New Right's threats are not new. Although each of the strands of feminism--conservative, liberal, socialist, radical, lesbian separatist, and revisionist--has a voice and an agenda, each differs strongly from the New Right's voice. But the liberal and the new conservative feminists have received the

most attention for their responses to the anti-feminist backlash of the New Right. The liberal branch of feminism represented by the National Organization for Women has perhaps been the most effective and has definitely received the most media attention. Despite all efforts, however, the ERA failed. Furthermore, the 1973 Roe vs Wade decision, which controlled state interference with a pregnant woman's choice of abortion, now stands a greater chance of being overturned than at any other time in the last fifteen years.

The defeat of the ERA and the danger of overturning Roe vs Wade have alerted feminists on the public scene as well as in academic circles. Feminists are taking the threat to women's rights seriously; they are writing extensively about women's equality, patriarchal motherhood, and reproductive choices while they expose the misconceptions perpetuated by the New Right. Among this group of scholars dealing with feminism and the New Right are Zillah Eisenstein with her analysis of the anti-feminism in the 1980s and Jean Bethke Elshtain with her discussion of conservative feminism.

Eisenstein describes why anti-feminism is so prevalent in our society. In her view, the liberal feminist platform will be most effective in combating the New Right. Her analysis deserves summary here because it presents a

trenchant feminist critique of the New Right's ideas on women.

Zillah Eisenstein builds a strong connection between militarism and anti-feminism. She uses the 1980 presidential election as the beginning point for her discussion. The theme of that election was to make America strong, to strengthen not only the family but also the military and thus the economy. The pro-family agenda became the voice and the language for the "make America strong" program. According to Eisenstein, the "profamily ideology helps to construct the militaristic mentality which seeks to justify the necessity of 'moral mothers' (and the patriarchal family) and 'moral wars' (the new militarism)." Eisenstein challenges us to rethink the conception of motherhood. She, like Adrienne Rich before her, makes the point that the institution of motherhood is political. The role of the woman as mother is a political construct rather than a biological manifestation. The New Right perpetuates this idea of motherhood as an institution that services the State. To Eisenstein, New Right anti-feminism assists the military agenda by reasserting the power of the father in the family and by portraying the mother as a person whose duty it is to "moralize" society. The concept of patriarchy is also central to Eisenstein's arguments.

The transformation of woman from a biological being (childbearer) to a political being (childrearer) is part of the conflict which is expressed in the politics of patriarchy. Patriarchy seeks to maintain the myth that patriarchal motherhood is a biological reality, rather than a politically constructed necessity.⁴⁶

Eisenstein goes on to point out further problems of the Right. In explaining why fundamentalists use the issue of abortion to rally their people, she notes that the Right manipulates people's thoughts into the categories of good and evil, the dualistic mind-set. She also clarifies the problem by discussing a conflict between patriarchy and capitalism. In a patriarchal society, she points out, women are needed as mothers, while in a capitalistic society, they are needed in the labor force. This conflict is one that the New Right has failed to reconcile.

Eisenstein discusses the fact that part of the reason that liberal feminists receive the most recognition is that their values of equal opportunity and legal equality accompanied with freedom of choice are a part of mainstream American politics. Because of this built-in, widespread support, she believes that feminists will have more success if they work from the position of the mainstream.

The radical potential of liberal feminism lies here in beginning to formulate a feminist politics which grows out of mainstream liberalism, but no longer accepts its boundaries. I therefore argue that the assault against the New Right can be launched most effectively by mainstream feminism because it is the most active political movement today. Its true force remains to be fully organized and directed against the New Right. But

if feminists--of all different progressive political orientations--do not seek to work with and utilize this radical potential of mainstream feminism, the conservative forces within feminism itself and the New Right will win out.⁴⁷

Thus Eisenstein asks feminists to utilize a movement already in existence, while also asking that the existing boundaries of the movement be stretched.

However, a conservative branch of feminism also deserves a hearing because it has simultaneously emerged with arguments that seek to answer the challenge of the New Right. Central to this conservative feminist approach is the denunciation of sexual politics which was at the forefront of the women's movement of the last two decades. The decade of the 1980s has been conservative in a number of ways. For example, liberal feminists have further realized the necessity of working within the existing system to accomplish their goals, so it should come as no surprise that a conservative feminist wing would develop to counter the radical tactics used in the 1960s and 1970s. There are three important parts to the conservative feminists' agenda.

First it promotes a "pro-family" stance that views sexual politics, and particularly the politicization of personal relationships, as threatening to "the family." Second, it affirms gender differentiation and celebrates traditionally feminine qualities, particularly those associated with mothering. Finally, new conservatives believe that struggle against male domination detracts from political agendas they consider more important.⁴⁸

New conservative feminist Jean Bethke Elshtain is one of the most vocal adherents of this new feminism. She has promoted the idea of the traditional conventional family and believes that the politics of sexual liberation threaten the conventional family. This view presents a problem for the feminist movement (which has sought to change both theory and practice of the conventional family). It appears that both fundamentalist women and conservative feminists, like Elshtain, share the same view of what the "ordinary" family should be. Elshtain does not define the ordinary family. Is it a husband, wife, two children, a pet? Is it husband, step-wife, and three step-children? The conventional family of the 1950s mostly exists in the minds of a few, but one mind in which this image is imbedded is Phyllis Schlafly's.

Her vision is of the white, upper-middle-class, heterosexual patriarchal family. She takes this structure as the natural God-given form that reflects the natural order of things.⁴⁹

Not only is this a limited vision, it is inaccurate in defining the family of the 1980s and 1990s. In actuality, "fathers work and mothers stay home in only 7% of American households."⁵⁰ Schlafly perpetuates the dualistic mind-set by setting up the "natural, god-ordained" family against any other type of family which virtually by definition becomes "un-natural and bad." Feminists' hold on reality protects them from such narrow definitions and from the dualistic

mind game. Other branches of feminism must continue to seek acceptance of the family as a social unit.

The American family today has many faces: partners who choose not to have children, grandparents with their divorced daughter and her three children, the lesbian couple with children, the husband and wife with foster children, the American husband and wife who adopt Asian refugee children, and the single mother of four. The limited definition of "family" of the conservative feminist and fundamentalist agenda poses serious problems for their claim that their theories represent reality. However, conservative feminists have performed a service in forcing feminist theorists to continue to explore aspects of family politics, such as child care and child development. Conservative feminists have once again asked that heterosexuality be evaluated historically if its complexity is to be fully understood.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

Leaders of the academic community have been understandably slow to raise their voices. The threat to freedom, I'm sure they feel, must be a real one before they have a legitimate cause to involve themselves in politics.

Perry Deane Young⁵¹

The feminist movement of the last century dealt with many of the same issues that the movement wrestles with today: family and work responsibilities, child care issues, and divorce laws. Unfortunately women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, with an all encompassing vision, could not get that vision across to the mainstream movement which was virtually fixated on winning the right to vote. After the Nineteenth Amendment passed, many feminists believed that true equality had been won, but the right to vote did not produce that equality. Today, feminists more than ever need to speak with the courage and conviction of Mrs. Stanton, who spoke about changing the divorce laws and who actually re-wrote the Bible at a time when such actions could and did bring painful social sanctions.

The decade of the 1980s has produced a conservative climate which the New Right fostered and which may persist into the next decade. Somehow feminists need to hang on to their gains and goals in this climate. For example, feminists should fight both for the passage of the ERA and for continued control of their own reproductive capacities.

Because the strength of the feminist movement has been its ability to mobilize its adherents to pursue its diverse vision, the hope for further social transformations rests in maintaining the vitality of that vision. Feminists must continue to fight the ruling patriarchy. As before, they can win success if their agenda continues more aptly to describe reality than the patriarchal model does. This feminist agenda must continue to include the following elements: reproductive choice, sexual freedom, rights for women of color, gay and lesbian rights, equality under the law, and opposition to violence against women. Each element of this agenda deserves discussion.

Reproductive choice regarding abortion and sterilization is critical to a feminist agenda. The right of women to control their bodies is a fundamental aspect of feminism. Health and sex education must be a part of this plan, otherwise women are unaware of the choices available to them.

Feminists advocate sexual freedom for all; however, this does not mean freedom from responsibility. The AIDS crisis has unfortunately associated sex with death, which is an association that is extremely detrimental to a person's developing and evolving sexuality. Because ours continues to be also a sexually repressed society, all people should be allowed to express themselves freely as long as they do not harm others.

Women of color continue to have to fight the double bind of sexism and racism. Patriarchal society continues to exploit their labor in the marketplace while the media further perpetuates stereotypes. All movements which seek to liberate people must include women of color because their experiences are important in developing an inclusive vision.

Associated with sexual freedom is the area of gay and lesbian rights. Feminists cannot sit by and allow discrimination based on sexual preference to occur. The popular saying "no one is free when others are oppressed" rings true.

Feminists fight for equality under the law, but it cannot be the primary focus of the feminist movement. To focus only on equality under the law would be too narrow a vision because the law alone does not guarantee equality. Political, social, and economic equality is desperately needed. Equitable education, housing, employment, and

health opportunities are parts of the agenda constantly in need of attention.

Three outcomes of perpetuated violence against women are rape, incest, and battering. Misogynism in this society says the five year old girl is "sexually promiscuous" or the wife not submissive enough. Court records show that in the U.S. the rapist is allowed to rape again. Until women are no longer seen as "other," inferior and submissive, this violence will continue.

All liberation movements have encountered backlash and the feminist movement is no exception. However, feminists challenge the very foundation of society-- patriarchy.

When put into long-term perspective, what at first seems an unexpected backlash against feminism and its policy goals of abortion and equal rights is no longer surprising. The demands of feminists raise profound doubts, doubts which the demands of blacks and other minorities do not raise. . . .⁵²

Feminists and all people advocating a more just and free society must join the fight against this anti-freedom backlash that celebrates the reign of the father. The opposition will continue to grow and gain power, but the feminist movement must not water down its agenda to answer questions posed by the Right. A vision that hopes to liberate all people from oppression is the vision that is

needed to carry us into the next century; the feminist movement offers such a vision.

However, the feminist movement should not have the total responsibility for liberating people from the archaic beliefs of the New Right. Academia also must share in this responsibility. Fundamentalism is a philosophy that few people take seriously or discuss. The academic community, which prides itself on the pursuit of wisdom, cannot continue to ignore the New Right. As is true with most movements, people are affected in one way or another by the New Right. Families and co-workers are oftentimes torn apart by the rhetoric of the New Right. When I began teaching I had a student in my class whose mother had "disowned" all of her children because they were not willing to convert to fundamentalism. We need to continue to educate ourselves and our colleagues about the Right and its platform so that we can encourage dialogue and thus better be able to defend our beliefs.

The New Right has effectively used certain tactics to further its agenda. Aside from excellent usage of the media and direct mail, it has implemented the old trick of pitting women against women. To counter the gains of the feminist movement, CWA came into existence with a format similar to that of NOW. These women, who serve as handmaidens of the male-dominated New Right, are taking part in their own

oppression. For example, one plank in the New Right agenda is to get women "back" into the house. CWA tells women it is their primary duty to serve their husbands and children and that the best place in which to do that is in the home. At the same time other conservative PACs try to eliminate the services and opportunities which allow women to work, namely affordable child care, education, job training, health care, and housing. The effort to eliminate or refuse to provide services for women has proven to be effective in furthering the New Right's plank that women's place is in the home, serving her husband and bearing and caring for their children.

Feminists believe the threat posed to freedom by this agenda is quite real and continue to challenge this opposition. Yet, the gains won through the dedicated work of all women and men committed to equality should not be seen as forever safe. If there is complacency instead of watchfulness and action, then Margaret Atwood's fiction in The Handmaid's Tale, which presents a story in which God and government are one, may turn into reality. Unlike those of the New Right who use tactics of fear and manipulation, those who adhere to the goals and gains of feminism shall overcome with peace and justice for all.

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